

March 27th, 2014 Watershed Protection Task Force Meeting

5:30 Introductions & Housekeeping- Ed Buchan, Environmental Coordinator

Task Force Members Present: Randy Stanger, Hardin Watkins. Charles Meeker , Richard Rogers , Tom Anhut

City of Raleigh Staff Present: Ed Buchan (Environmental Coordinator), John Carman (Public Utilities Director), Leigh Ann Hammerbacher (Water Conservation Specialist), Kenny Waldrop (Assistant Public Utilities Director)

Other Attendees: Henry MacNair, Katherine Baer, Caitlin Burke, Reid Wilson, Kevin Brice, George Mathis, Bill Flournoy. Suzanne Harris, Paul Wiebke, Chris Dreps, Jennifer Fitts

5:45 Welcome and Overview of Historical Watershed Protection Efforts- Carman, Public Utilities Director

Carman welcomed the task force and public. Carman noted that the City has a long tradition of investing in innovative efforts to protect our water resources. Carman cited the *1887 Annual Report of the Mayor and officer of the City of Raleigh*, in which the committee noted that it “considers our water-works system the equal of any and inferior to none.”

5:50 The UNCWI Program- Charles Meeker provided a brief background summary on the program. The program first started in 2005 in response to a desire to implement non-regulatory responses to help with the increasing levels of nutrients and sediment in Falls Lake, the City’s main drinking water resource. The Upper Neuse Riverkeeper and local land trusts proposed the idea of a land protection program. The program provided a non-regulatory means for Raleigh to help protect its water resources.

The Conservation Trust for North Carolina (CTNC) also provided a brief background on their role in the partnership and unique ability to work with landowners outside of Raleigh’s jurisdiction to help conserve projects identified as a high priority for watershed protection.

6:05 Water Supply Watersheds: Leigh Ann Hammerbacher, Water Conservation Specialist presented information on the City’s water supply watershed and the program success- *See slides*

The program has mainly been implanted in the Falls Lake Watershed. The City also has completed one project in the Swift Creek Watershed and has expanded the program to cover this area since the Dempsey E. Benton Water Treatment Plant has been brought online. In total, the City has worked with partners to complete 38 projects, protecting 40 miles of stream with an overall contribution of \$4.04 million.

6:20 Challenges and Opportunities

Staff highlighted several challenges and opportunities including changes in matching funds resources and expansion of the program to additional water supply watershed. *See slides*

6:30 Review of Objectives and goals

The Watershed Protection Advisory Task Force is created to provide direction for future program goals and criteria.

The task force brought up several additional questions related to the program. Staff noted the following questions and will provide more information on these questions at the next task force meeting.

- How successful has the program been? What percentage of originally identified priority area has been protected?
- What is the baseline for water quality of the lake since the inception of the program? Has the program helped improve water quality? Can you provide information on the water quality in falls lake since 2005?
- What are the major factors influencing water quality in the lake?
- Can you provide an up to date summary of projects in terms of what has been completed, funds expended, and what is “in the pipeline”.
- How much land in total has been protected in the watershed?
- What types of implementation strategies could be used for watershed protection?
- Are there simpler means of offsetting nutrients then easements/ acquisitions? Could you just consider landowners payments such as payments to limit fertilizers at a much lower cost than this program?
- How was the watershed protection fee and rate structure developed?
- What are the existing regulatory requirements for buffers in the watershed (county, muni, COE, Falls Rules, Neuse Rules, water supply watershed, etc..)?

6:45 Proposed Meeting Schedule and future Agendas- Next meeting April 27th, 2014, Raleigh Municipal building Room 305 at 5:30

6:50 Public Comments

Several groups expressed thanks and appreciation for the program.

Other comments included:

- How was the rate developed? Could a flat fee or different rate structure provide another means of funding the program?
- Do you have more information on nutrient offset calculations and associated numbers?
- Is there more information on septic impacts/presence?
- Is this program working in coordination with the Wake County Open Space program? Are there opportunities for partnership?
- THE UNRBA spent a significant amount of time developing 19 management strategies for the protection of Falls Lake. Can these strategies be used as a resource for this program?